

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee Meeting

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) Meeting Summary

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Cortez Hill A Room

Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego

1 Market Place

San Diego, CA 92101

Committee Members:

Gregory Mathes, Director, Grants & Foundations, Goodwill of Orange County

Ray Grott, Director, RET Project, SFSU

Doug Sale, CO, CWIB

Helen Ferreira, PIRS

Jennifer Walsh, CEO, COMAAT

Jon Paris-Salb, Education Administrator, Department of Education

Debbie Drennan, AT Specialist, Parents Helping Parents

Kim Cantrell, CFILC

Brian Winic, SSMI, DOR Blind Field Services

DOR Staff:

Ann Johnson, SSMI, ILATS

Sheila Conlon-Mentkowski, RA I, ILATS

Robert McCarthy, AGPA, ILCAD

Guests:

Randyce Wechter, President, AdaptiveVoice LLC.

Excused:

Lenore Presley, Deaf-Blind Community

Karen Crowe, SSMI, DOR

Karen Andersen

Daniel Boomer, Department of Education

Absent: Paul Carver

Agenda Item 1: Introductions

Gregory Mathes, ATAC Chair, called the meeting to order. Gregory welcomed the committee and staff. Introductions were made.

Agenda Item 2: Meeting Summary Approval

Minutes from the October 29, 2013 meeting were reviewed; there were no changes.

Chair, Gregory Mathes asked for a motion to approve meeting minutes. Jon Paris-Salb moved for approval, Debbie Drennan seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Agenda Item 3: DOR Department AT Update

Sheila Conlon Mentkowski, DOR staff, provided updates on several items: the State Annual AT Reports have been submitted to RSA and will be posted to the ATAC DOR website when they are approved, along with the documents distributed for this meeting. The DOR PROMISE Grant is in the implementation stage, the next step is an interagency stakeholder meeting. Committee members would like to have someone make a presentation on the Promise Grant at the next ATAC meeting in the fall to help the committee engage in a more integrated way because the 3 year planning cycle will begin this year.

DOR is working to identify an appropriate point of contact to help facilitate for the process for the Loan Guarantee Program (LGP) and have the LGP in place by October 2015, but it is still in the planning stages.

Joe Xavier has succeeded Tony Sauer as Director of DOR and will likely be at the fall ATAC meeting to be held in Sacramento.

Ann Johnson, DOR staff, provided an update on the structure of ILATS and reported that she has been working closely with CFILC on AT with the California Independent Living Centers and their AT staff.

A concern was expressed to the committee that AT Network information seems to be siloed and it is a good time to bring together stakeholder agencies to gain alignment, more collaboration, and a website that lists AT available across the state. A member suggested having a site on the CDE website that would lead to where AT services and devices are available throughout the state which would be a good resource for all of the state agencies and their constituencies.

Agenda Item 4: AT Network Deliverables

Kim Cantrell shared information about attending the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Conference in Florida held by ATIA

Kim provided her report on AT Network Deliverables using a 'top ten' list format (aka David Letterman style):

Number 10: Minimum loan requirements for CFILC's device loan program have resulted in increased number of device loans for the current year beginning July 1; CFILC is in process with aggregating that data. In January they began an 'open house' outreach approach, inviting other ILCs to also host open houses; 7 Open Houses were held with good attendance. The open house strategy was deemed successful, resulting in more device loans, but January was not the best time to host Open Houses due to weather. Summer of 2015 is the next planned event. Debbie Drennan attended one of the open houses; she concurred it was effective. She noted the AT loan program is underutilized in the K-12 system and suggested more outreach to schools. CDE's Braille and Teach List Service (BNT) is another example of an underserved market within Special Education.

Number 9: The reach of the AT Network is increasing. An increasing number of school staff is requesting information, aware of CFILC, and the AT Network itself, which has not previously been the case.

Number 8: CFILC culled strategies from ATIA resulting in more vendor partnerships, increased number of discounts for AT networks and device lending libraries, and shorter (web-based) device trainings that improve access.

Number 7: CFILC has a new monthly electronic bulletin that began in October which shows the new devices for free or loan, archived trainings, photos, and is accessible.

Number 6: A statewide Earth Day reuse campaign the week of April 22nd that will capitalize on National Earth Day's program. Ten (10) reuse centers are participating; data will be tracked so best practices can be shared. CFILC reported that they are in need of additional funds - to continue supporting the reuse initiative.

Number 5: Partnering and collaboration with USDA's CalAgrAbility Project through sharing of each others' information while conducting outreach to connect with AT consumers in rural areas; CFILC will provide web training for rural consumers in two languages.

Number 4: CFILC's AT website is in development and should deploy in June; it has a partner's portal for reporting and will be more user friendly for consumers.

Number 3: CFILC is partnering with the state Office of Emergency Services (OES) to provide reimbursement for device lending libraries, reuse centers or independent living centers and transport of AT to emergency areas through existing first responder transportation mechanisms. Committee members asked about general emergency preparedness for consumers and what processes exist for a national emergency. FEMA would involve different parameters; CFILC is networked with other states that have had FEMA involvement and is learning as they go, but it's complicated and begins at the state OES level.

Number 2: The "Keep the Wheels Rolling Repair Fund" reopened in November 2013. Organizations can apply for up to \$300 for repairs in exchange for their data and listing their organization on the AT Network. Funding is \$11,000 with \$3,000 currently allocated.

Number 1: Increased collaboration. CFILC has a contract with the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) which offers broadband internet available at low or no cost to eligible low income consumers. There is a meeting scheduled with high level staff in the San Francisco school district to share more about AT in their system.

General input/concerns from the Committee

Leadership: Committee Chair, Gregory Mathes remarked that this committee is really an advisory committee for broader leadership and collaboration and participation from other state agencies (DDS, Aging, etc.) would increase ATAC impact.

In regard to the AT Network, concerns expressed include: information sharing, non-comprehensive inventories or slow processes, AT Trainings that are more frequent and shorter duration (web based-accessible-real-time), centralized calendaring and communication that will reduce or avoid duplication of efforts by partners. Getting information to parents, area action groups, and health care service organizations would increase awareness. Items of general concern include the federal Office of Special Education which created a new consort that started in January 2013 focusing on AT and

early intervention. ATAC would like to see collaboration especially in relation to serving 0 to 3 year olds where there is disconnect understanding tools and communicating. Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA): Regional SELPAs (one Northern, one Southern CA) receive funding and there apparently is no data collection as they work on an in area basis. There is a perceived lack of accountability, procedures that create hoarding warehouses, and technology that doesn't follow the SELPA consumer when they move beyond the SELPA.

Reporting: federal reporting requirements and leveraged funding, what reporting happens and to whom? How can better data/analytics be collected or made available. Kim provided an overview of CFILC reporting and the structure/criteria for each type of report. Quarterly reporting focuses on public awareness activities and is narrative. CFILC is beginning to ask for data on skill/ability building, but capacity is an issue with a small staff. The annual federal RSA report is mostly numerical. Chair Gregory Mathes asked if graphs could be incorporated into reports for a better sense of AT activity.

There was a discussion of webinars and what platforms were accessible. There are a number of AT webinars on the Internet and most are archived. CFILC is attempting to link the available webinars for people to search and use. Kim said CFILC has finally been able to post all the transcripts of their archived webinar trainings. CFILC is looking for a webinar platform that has all the components for accessibility including captioning. The webinar has to be easy to navigate by a screen reader user and must have integrated real-time captioning. Webinar presenters have to be able to give a web tour, follow from website to website, and have the ability to share the desktop screen.

Loan Programs: Kim provided an overview. There are two, the state program run with state funding and it currently has no lender. CFILC received federal funding in 2012 for a total of \$1 million that is currently about \$830,000. It is unclear whether CF's program can work with the California's LGP.

Lunch Break 12 TO 1 PM

Agenda Item 5: Action Items Update/Discussion

Items were discussed out of order in this part of the agenda due to a perceived need to discuss the proposed bylaws before Membership Status & Recruitment.

B. Bylaws: Time was given for members to review the proposed draft bylaws. Bylaws discussion ensued. The Assistive Technology Act of 2004 relating to the Advisory Committee and membership representation are reflected in the bylaws.

Purpose: The Committee recommends the Director's Charge should also be referenced in the first section under a separate letter (C) "see Director's Charge". The draft bylaws reflect the statutory requirements of the federal AT Act of 2004 while the Director's AT Charge is not directly referenced in the draft bylaws currently.

A. ATAC Member Status & Recruitment: Bylaws have not been in place before so it is unclear when terms begin and end for existing committee members. It is anticipated that once bylaws are approved, current member terms would begin as opposed to a historical clock.

Appropriate representation of various AT Stakeholder populations should be represented on the committee; some populations not currently represented included

Youth, Developmentally Disabled Population, and the Blind, review is needed; membership should be proportionate with populations represented (ex. if 30 or 40% of AT is going to Developmentally Disabled population then membership/leadership should represent that). The recruitment process is unclear, but Sheila believes letters are sent out from the Director when candidates are identified. Chair Gregory Mathes expressed concern regarding the level of leadership and knowledge DOR wants on the committee; strategy and planning that result in positive outcomes are directly related to committee leadership - its access to information statewide and ability to collaborate with appropriate programs or agencies. Sheila confirmed DOR leadership's alignment with this need for experience and expertise on ATAC is important; she will take concerns back to DOR and send out guidance/feedback.

C. Update on the State Price Schedule (SPS) report from Ralph Black: The committee took a few minutes to review the SPS process, but did not have much new information since last fall's ATAC meeting. Issues discussed during the last meeting continue with inconsistency of actual application of the SPS guidelines. Vice Chair Ray Grott solicited input from a group of vendors prior to the ATAC meeting and provided an update to the committee. The overall application of DOR policy and guidelines for SPS issued February 2103 is inconsistent. Power struggles between the PTIIs and counselors appear to occur; our understanding is that DOR agreed counselors were best suited to make vendor decisions if adequate justification is provided. Guidance to procurement staff appears to be based solely on cost rather than best value justifications. Procurement staff is inconsistent reviewing vendor quotes and allow substitutions without first checking with counselors; some vendors insert unsolicited quotes for other services. There is a perception that is no verification process for information provided on the SPS. There are still vendors who are not indicating existing conflicts of interest as well as incorrectly stating that they are authorized product vendors; however, there is no practical mechanism for reporting such problems. There seems to be a message to procurement staff that products and services should be acquired from a broader group of suppliers; at times resulting in requesting bids from non-local vendors who cannot provide product support or who are not authorized to provide the requested AT, creating problems and delays for the end users.

(Since Ralph was unable to attend the meeting Sheila read a brief response sent by email which was included in meeting documents).

Summary of Ralph Black's SPS Update: Newly restructured SPS was launched last spring 2013 and training on the use of the system has been provided to counselors, procurement staff, Reasonable Accommodation (RA) coordinators, managers and supervisors. Updates have been provided to ATAC, BAC, and other advisory DOR groups. Questions about use of the SPS, interaction with other procurement procedures, and how decisions related to purchasing through the SPS should be made within DOR. An SPS FAQ document is in process that will address vendor loaner AT policies and State Contract Manual stipulations. SPS is close to an agreement with DGS to rent accessible vehicles for vendor SPS participation to facilitate state travel needs for state employees with disabilities.

Break 2:00 - 2:15

Agenda Item 6: Action Items Update/Discussion – Continued

A: DOR Director's AT Charge. This should be reviewed by the new Director to assure it reflects his values as leader of DOR and to initiate dialogue between DOR, Director Xavier, and ATAC. The reviewed Director's Charge will be sent back out to the committee prior to the next meeting.

B: ATAC 3 Year Plan. Chair Gregory Mathes asked for a review of the planning process for submitting the 2015-2018 RSA AT Plan due February 2015. Kim provided an overview. Activities are Training, Public Awareness, Information and Referral, Collaboration, and TA in four areas: Reuse, Financial Loan, Device Loan, and Device Demonstration. In simple terms, the question of what services do you want to provide is answered and the services/activities provided affect distribution ratios for funding. If all four activities are engaged, funding is divided at a rate of 60/40 (state level activities/leadership); if DOR/ATAC opts out of one (e.g. Device -Demonstration) funding would be split at 70/30. More can be spent at the state level, but not less. CFILC has the capacity to do demonstrations and would like to increase that activity; demonstrations are also provided in other organizations statewide. Discussion ensued on the strategy to engage in demonstrations. The state plan has only one sentence addressing this, in essence "this service is covered by other service providers" so we don't need to engage in it. Kim stated if we do not include a service/activity in the plan it cannot be added for 3 years. Chair Mathes suggested stakeholder input is appropriate on ATAC activities and the planning process and asked how ATAC manages that need in relationship to providing input on the state plan due February 2015. There was a discussion of Bagley-Keene compliance and how electronic transmissions could be used. Kim can set up a list serv for ATAC members keeping in mind it is for information only. The listserv and emails cannot be used for policy making or voting on policy per Bagley-Keene requirements.

Agenda Item 7: Open Discussion

Chair Gregory Mathes opened the meeting for discussion. Concern over AT centers not serving children ages 0 to 3 years old; this demographic is underserved due to apparent procedural issues. Should someone from the Early Start Community be on ATAC? Another area of need is a lack of qualified AT assessments in the K-12 system; vendors will provide non-certified AT assessments. Gaining recognition of AT assessment certification from hiring organizations is a problem. State of CA does have a proposal, but its current status is unknown. Contractors may be restricted by grant fund stipulations regarding provision of AT assessments. AB 204 supports AT assessments; funds can be redirected for this purpose.

One-Stops are required by the Governor to recertify local boards every 2 years according to US Department of Labor standards. The One Stops are required to be accessible to the public which ensures the facility and equipment are accessible to the public. The state board sets policy and EDD is the administrative body. In general: can we improve collaboration and coordination across all state agencies? CalVets is a conspicuous example. Schools are another under penetrated area in term of access to

AT that facilitate employability and promotion of independent living; how to improve population awareness. Other desirable collaborative partners: OES, Medi-Cal, and the SRC. (Chair Gregory Mathes will send The Assistive Technology Loan and Reuse Program Report by The Center for Accessible Technology to Sheila for review).

Agenda Item 8: Next steps

Summary of concerns and follow up items:

- Wordsmith of bylaws by DOR
 - Incorporation of the Director's Charge
 - Committee Composition Language and ATAC's involvement in the selection process; ensure alignment with 51% disability requirement
 - Identification/clarification of ATAC goals, timelines, outcomes
 - DOR to send updated bylaws to ATAC for review prior to the fall meeting for review, the approval and vote will happen at the meeting
- DOR input for committee leadership levels and knowledge needed on the committee; strategy and planning that result in positive outcomes are directly related to committee composition (Sheila will take concerns back to DOR and send out guidance/feedback)
 - DOR to identify which seats are open
 - DOR to explain ATAC's role in selecting ATAC members
- Sheila – send a copy of the vendor input summary to the Committee Chairman
- Set date of fall 2014 ATAC meeting in Sacramento at DOR
- Recruit PROMISE Grant representative to speak to ATAC; how the committee can collaborate in this project?
- Ralph Black to update ATAC on DGS State Price Schedule and vendor input/issues
- Protocol for recruiting support/assistance/alignment from state agencies
- Ascertain policy for diagnosis, service, and AT provision for children ages 0 to 3 years. (Check with Debbie Drennan)
- Proposed AT presentation to the CCEPD and SRC to develop/promote collaborative relationships
- Kim will speak with Christina Mills re service protocols for 0 to 3 year old population

ADJOURN 4:00 PM